

Bryan Ribbens
615 College SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The Honorable Gerald Helmholdt
Mayor, City of Grand Rapids

June 6, 1988

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Enclosed you will find a copy of a testimonial resolution which we hope you will sign.

A bit of background is perhaps in order. About 30 or 40 Grand Rapids citizens attended the national Gay rights march on Washington last October 11 and came back to our city with a sense of purpose and vision for the Gay civil rights cause. They began to meet together to discuss what could be done for this cause in Grand Rapids.

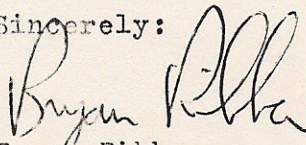
Over the last 10 years at least a dozen Gay and Lesbian groups have formed to address specific needs of the community--needs such as the issues of "coming out", or helping parents of Gays to cope, or dealing with religion and sexual orientation, or substance abuse in the Gay community, or the special problems of Gay youth, or finding friendship and acceptance within the community.

Our community has developed and matured over the last decade to the point that we need to speak with a more unified voice. We need to tell Grand Rapids that we are a healthy and vital people who pay taxes, own homes, support our families, contribute our talents, and vote in this community. It is for this reason the Lesbian Gay Community Network of West Michigan was formed.

You will also find enclosed copies of our first two newsletters and the first press release sent out several weeks ago.

It is fitting that in this sesquicentennial year the city recognizes the special needs and special contributions of a part of its citizenry that has been traditionally ignored. It will be an important symbolic recognition for us to have Grand Rapids endorse this resolution.

Sincerely:


Bryan Ribbens